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3 April 1973

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LAOS: Optimism about new government wanes.

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*LAOS: THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW MUCH LESS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

AFTER A CAREFUL STUDY OF THE PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BY THE PATHET LAO LAST WEEK, GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATOR PHENG PHONGSAVAN DOUBTS THAT A NEW GOVERNMENT COULD BE FORMED BY PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA'S SELF-IMPOSED DEADLINE OF 15 APRIL. PHENG CLAIMS THAT ALTHOUGH DIFFERENCES ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW COALITION COULD EASILY BE WORKED OUT, THE COMMUNISTS INSIST THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLITICAL FEATURES OF THE LAO PEACE AGREEMENT MUST AWAIT AGREEMENT ON MILITARY MATTERS.

THE TWO SIDES REMAIN FAR APART ON THREE IMPORTANT MILITARY ISSUES. THE PATHET LAO REPORTEDLY REFUSE TO GRANT ANY SUPERVISORY POWER TO THE LAO JOINT COMMISSION AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL COMMISSION. THEY ARE ALSO PRESSING FOR A FORMAL DEMARCATION OF ZONES OF CONTROL, WHICH SOUVANNA HAS SAID WOULD LEAD TO A DE FACTO PARTITION. THE PATHET LAO ALSO WANT TO DEMILITARIZE VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG--A MOVE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE LAO ARMY AND OTHER RIGHTISTS.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THE COMMUNISTS HAVE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED THEMSELVES TO ISSUES THAT WERE LEFT VAGUE IN THE PEACE AGREEMENT CONCLUDED IN FEBRUARY, AND THEIR INITIAL TOUGH STANCE SUGGESTS THAT NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE PROTRACTED.

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*Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense.

3 Apr 73

Central Intelligence Bulletin

2

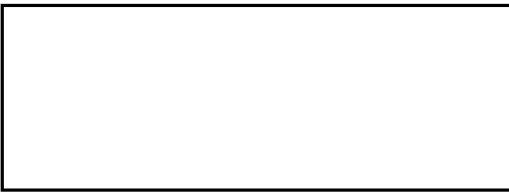
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Next 9 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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